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CrossSeekers urges collegians to 'be more'

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — "Be more." That was the simple two-word challenge issued to more than 3,000 college students and older high school students throughout the "CrossSeekers: Celebration of the Covenant" at the Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, Sept. 4-5.

The phrase was printed on a banner in the main auditorium and referenced in several messages, music concerts, and conference sessions. And during the closing session of the event, 2,337 students responded to that challenge by signing the "CrossSeekers Covenant," a six-point document calling them to

a life-style of integrity, spiritual growth, an authentic and consistent witness, service, purity, and Christlike relationships.

"I think this is another good illustration of how this covenant is touching something in the hearts of today's Christian college students. They want to get serious about their faith and this is proving to be a great vehicle to help them do it," said Bill Henry, director of National Student Ministry (NSM), which



CHAPMAN PERFORMS — Contemporary Christian artist Steven Curtis Chapman entertained more than 3,000 college students attending "CrossSeekers: Celebration of the Covenant" Sept. 4-5 in New Orleans. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

sponsored the two-day celebration. The Southern Baptist ministry, part of LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville, Tenn., launched CrossSeekers last year as part of an intentional focus on transformational discipleship.

While initiated by Southern Baptists, the movement has gained the support of other Christian groups, such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). Prior to the New Orleans event, 19 CrossSeekers rallies had been held in 11 states and more than 6,000 students had signed the covenant. The New Orleans conference, the first national CrossSeekers event, was held to celebrate that response and foster continued participation in the movement. While the majority of participants came from the deep South, more than a dozen states were represented, including Ohio, Montana, and New York.

Anne Graham Lotz, founder of AnGeL Ministries in Raleigh, N.C., was the first to challenge the students. In today's politically and morally changing world, the daughter of evangelist Billy Graham urged them to remember that "character counts."

"What you're hearing is what you do in private has nothing to do with your public life — character is not important. ... But that is a flawed philosophy,"

Lotz said. "Sooner or later, you will end up in destruction; your life will collapse."

The students also heard from Christian athletes like Danny Wuerffel, quarterback of the New Orleans Saints and a former Heisman Trophy winner from the University of Florida; and Cameron Mills, a member of the University of Kentucky's 1998 national championship-winning basketball team.

"Being a quarterback for the Saints is kind of like being a Christian; it's not where you're at, it's where you're headed," Wuerffel said.

He challenged students to turn their lives completely over to God's leadership.

"At some point in our lives we have to get down on our knees and say, 'Lord, I've tried it my way ... and that's not making it. I want to put it in your hands. ... And that's not something I did once; I have to do it every day,'" he said.



TIME WITH GOD — April Phillips, a student at Pensacola Junior College in Pensacola, Fla., spends time in prayer during a general session of the "CrossSeekers: Celebration of the Covenant" in New Orleans. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

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Baptist vol among victims

BRANDON, Fla. (BP) — Florida Baptist Jonathan Wilson, 22, was one of the 229 people killed when Swissair Flight 111 crashed into the Atlantic Ocean near Peggy's Cove in Nova Scotia, Canada, Sept. 2. There were no survivors.

Wilson, a member of Crosstown Community Church in Brandon, was traveling to Switzerland for a short-term mission project in association with the evangelical organization Youth With A Mission.

A National Merit semifinalist and graduate of Bloomingdale High School in Brandon, Wilson was active in Crosstown church's singles' organization, Cornerstone.

He was the oldest child of evangelist Tim Wilson and his wife Judy. Tim Wilson is the founding pastor of Crosstown (formerly Calvary Church) and former senior pastor of Bell Shoals Church in Brandon. He has been a full-time evangelist for two years and currently is working with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in preparation for Graham's upcoming crusade in Tampa.

Looking back

10 years ago

More than 900 people participate in a Nashville listening session called by the Southern Baptist Alliance. Participants are asked to ponder the question "Where do we go from here?" The meeting is called following the defeat of moderate presidential candidate Richard Jackson of Phoenix.

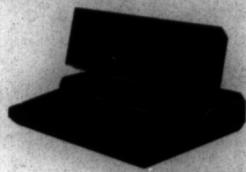
20 years ago

The first convention-wide orientation for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's new Mission Service Corps volunteers is held in Atlanta, with 28 participants coming from as far away as California and Colorado.

50 years ago

Eight years ago the WMU held its first Institute for Leaders, a training event for Negro workers. This summer 159 women from 113 churches participate in the four-day event. Expenses for 96 of the participants are provided by a local Women's Missionary Society group.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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The carriers of the offering

He was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.

— II Cor. 8:19-21 (NIV)

Being chosen to "carry the offering" is one of the most important responsibilities our church can ask of us. If bringing Mississippi and the world to Jesus is our paramount mission, offerings are needed to accomplish the task. If offerings are needed to accomplish the task, honest men and women are needed to take care of the offerings that are given.

God has seeded our churches with thousands of these men and women who strive to account for every penny given in the name of the Lord. They can be spotted each week, meticulously counting the contents of the offering plates after worship service has adjourned.

They fill in the deposit slips as if it is their own money, because they are keenly aware that this money is more important than their own money. They understand the gravity of the calling they have answered.

They've been doing their job so well for so long that we often forget to thank them for the personal and spiritual integrity they bring to this crucial responsibility.

Some of our sister denominations in recent years have been rocked by financial scandals. If you believe it can't happen to us, you'd better give the subject a lot more thought.

Just last week another Mississippi Baptist church congregation discovered they are staring at financial ruin because of alleged mismanagement and embezzlement of the offerings. A just-completed outside audit confirmed losses may total between \$100,000-\$200,000.

Barri A. Shirley, business administrator at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, estimates that Mississippi Baptist churches have suffered embezzlement losses of more than \$1,000,000 in the last three years alone.

Pause for a moment to let that statistic sink in. Every church has a responsibility to account for the sacrificial offerings given by its members. There may not be a certified public accountant in the congregation, but there is a way to learn how to manage your church's books.

It's called "Safeguarding Your Church Offerings," a 50-page booklet designed to guide churches in the area of financial accountability.

Written by Dolly S. Weger of DSW Bookkeeping, Inc., of Brandon, and published through the Cooperative Program by the MBCB Stewardship Department, "Safeguarding Your Church Offerings" is available free of charge to all cooperating Mississippi Baptist churches.

While not intended to be a substitute for



the work of a qualified accountant, the booklet is nonetheless filled with Bible-based advice and samples of financial forms to help churches accurately record offerings.

A copy of the booklet can be obtained by contacting the MBCB Stewardship Department at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

If you have been given the tremendous responsibility of carrying your church's offerings, remember that in the words of the Apostle Paul, you must do so for the honor of the Lord himself, and you must take pains to do what is right in the eyes of both the Lord and men.

Remember also that there is help. Get "Safeguarding Your Church's Offerings."

In the Kingdom work we have accepted from our Savior, there are very few jobs more crucial than yours.

Thanks from all of us, to all of you, for doing it so well.

GUEST OPINION:



Is gambling really 'harmless'?

By Brian Williamson, pastor
Corinth Church, Purvis



ANTI-GAMBLING SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 20, 1998

Even at a slot machine, where you may have as good as 1 in 65,000 chance of winning, it's the 64,999 losers the casinos love.

Yet they certainly don't give you that impression in their advertisements, do they? Do casinos love their neighbor? I guess so, as long as their neighbors lose.

Millions are falling victim to casinos. I watched one family break up because of gambling debt. I've seen children left in cars at casinos. I counseled one man who owed over \$30,000 in gambling losses.

Childcare centers baby-sit children while Mom and Dad gamble. These centers spend great time and effort to ensure that children have a wonderful time. Why? They want families to enjoy themselves, so they will come back and join the rest of the losers the casinos love so much.

Do you think casinos genuinely love those children? No! They see dollar signs.

Would you deposit money in a bank where there was a greater than 99% chance that the bank would be robbed, and where there was no guarantee from the FDIC? Common sense says no. Well, odds are that you'll be "robbed" at a casino.

Casinos literally buy off communities with promises of boosting the local economy and providing funds for better schools.

Do you think casinos really care about local economies and education? Nope. All they really care about is making people losers, and walking away with the spoils.

Don't gamble. It's wrong.

For more information on gambling issues, contact the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Sept. gambling conferences to be held across state

A series of gambling conferences will be held September 21-24 across the state, under the theme, "More Than A Risk."

The conferences will begin at 1 p.m. and conclude by 8:30 p.m. The conferences are open to anyone and there is no pre-registration or cost for the seminars, which are being made possible by gifts to the Cooperative Program.

The conference dates and locations:

- Sept. 21: First Church, Grenada
- Sept. 22: Park Place Church, Brandon
- September 24: First Church, Lyman (Gulfport)

The conferences will introduce new materials for addressing the gambling menace in local communities; provide discussion about the future of gambling in Mississippi; sermon

and teaching suggestions for pastors and laypersons; and will feature the testimony of a person whose life and livelihood was shattered by gambling.

Seminar leaders include Larry Garner of Metro Association, Jackson; Chuck Pourciau, pastor of First Church, Louisville; Paul G. Jones II, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission (CAC); Elizabeth K. Holmes, CAC consultant for women's and family issues; and John Eades, psychologist and recovering compulsive gambler who will tell his story of personal failure and recovery.

Eades is a resident of Winchester, Tenn. He is a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham with a bachelor's degree. He also holds a masters

degree in counseling from the University of Montevallo in Montevallo, Ala., and a Ph.D. from the University of Alabama.

He is certified both as an alcohol and drug therapist and as a gambling addiction therapist.

Eades is currently the outreach director at Southern Tennessee Medical Center in west Tennessee. He has served as director of addictive diseases programs at Southland Hospital in Mobile, and was director of chemical dependency services for Singing River Hospital in Pascagoula.

Eades is the author of two books. Both books are collections of short stories that focus on the human spirit, self-understanding and relationships. The two works, *The Seventh Story Ain't Too High For*

Angels to Fly, and *Waiting on Halley's Comet*, have received rewards for excellence.

He is presently writing a book about gambling addiction. *Don't Bet Your Life: The New Epidemic of Gambling Addiction* will reflect the personal tragedy of addiction to gambling.

For more information, contact CAC at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

Record

THE BAPTIST

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National gambling panel visits Gulf Coast

By Paul G. Jones II, Executive Director
Miss. Baptist Christian Action Commission

The National Gambling Impact Study Commission, a nine-member panel created by the U.S. Congress to examine gambling in America, held its Mississippi hearing Sept. 10 in Biloxi.

Casino promoters and supporters had promised to make the commission's Gulf Coast stop the most memorable and enthusiastic, but a Wednesday night rally to support the so-called "Mississippi Miracle" fizzled when attendance barely reached the 1,000 mark. A rally supporter indicated that promoters had printed 10,000 "I am part of the Mississippi Miracle" T-shirts.

The Sept. 10 hearing, attended by less than 150 people, began sharply at 8 a.m. Addressing "gambling and the national economy," the commission heard:

• Jason Ader, senior managing director of New York-based investment firm Bear Stearns and Company.

• Bill Thompson, professor at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas.

• Steve Comer of the Las Vegas office of public accountant firm Arthur Andersen,

• Tim Ryan, dean of the business school at the University of New Orleans.

Each of the panelists attempted to paint a positive picture of the economic value to the nation's economy.

The second session featured a discussion of "gambling and economically depressed communities." Jimmy Heidel, executive director of the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development in Jackson, also had a positive presentation on the effects of gambling.

Tunica County Administrator Kenneth Murphree touted the success of gambling in his north Mississippi county, but failed to include the fact that the area within 75 miles of Tunica has the six-largest number of bankruptcies in the nation.

Mike McCormick, a Biloxi bankruptcy attorney, pointed out that one in five bankruptcies he sees is due to gambling debts.

He suggested that "if they are here to stay, let them pay." On the same panel was Rachel Caine, the Salvation Army's director of the domestic violence shelter on the coast. She described bruised and battered women and children who are the final work of the gambler's art.

Caine was followed by Donna Kelly who claimed that gambling has "helped to play a role in weakening and destroying personal lives, families and relationships." Kelly testified that she lost almost \$100,000 to video poker machines.

The afternoon panel on "gambling and crime" heard about a litany of criminal activity associated with gambling. The highlight of the afternoon was the testimony of ex-Chicago mobster William Jahoda, who asserted gambling and crime go hand in hand and when there is big money to be made, the mob will be in attendance.

Anti-gambling leaders held a press conference during the noon hour on Sept. 10. Hosted by James Dobson, a commission member and president of Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, Colo., the press conference featured Kiely Young, pastor of First Church, Gulfport; Al Wallace, director of the United Methodist Church's Seashore Mission; Dean Register, pastor of Temple Church, Hattiesburg, and president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention; Tom Mimms, director of the Gulf Coast Rescue Mission; and Paul Jones, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission (CAC).

The ministers spoke of the personal gambling tragedies they have encountered. Wallace asked if the woman who lost all she had in the casinos was a part of the "Mississippi Miracle." Dobson asserted that "there is obviously another side to it." Young contended, "It's more than an economic issue. It's a human issue."

Mimms reminded the press conference that "someone who is succeeding in gambling is living off someone else's tragedy." All five men told of people they believe have been destroyed by gambling.

Jones and Wallace concluded the conference by asserting that the key to beating gambling lies outside the traditional political activities and public demonstrations.

They agreed that "we need to get back to basics, and the basics are Jesus Christ."

The commission moved to New Orleans on Sept. 11 for a hearing in the city where gambling efforts in recent years have ended in failure, bankruptcies, and accusation of political corruption.

The final report of the National Gambling Impact Study Committee is expected in about a year.

Farewell to friend, colleague



Eugene Dobbs (left), Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) executive assistant, congratulates retiring MBCB executive director-treasurer Bill Causey (center) and his wife Charlotte during a Sept. 10 dinner held in Jackson to honor Causey's nine years in the post. He will officially retire at the end of September. Jim Futral, former pastor of Broadmoor Church, Jackson, was unanimously selected Aug. 5 by the convention board to become the next executive director-treasurer on Oct. 1. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Coast casino workers form Bible fellowship

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Gathered in an office building in downtown Gulfport, they look like any other group of Christians about to embark on Bible study, but there is something uniquely different about this group.

Each participant works at a Mississippi casino.



Landrum

LifeWay prints revised BF&M

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A revised edition of the Baptist Faith and Message tract was released Sept. 1 by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

The tract was revised to include a four-paragraph "family article" added to the confessional statement with approval by messengers to the June 9-11 annual meeting of the SBC in Salt Lake City.

Drafted by a seven-member special committee, Article 18 describes marriage as "the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime." It also notes, "The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. ... A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. ... A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ."

In addition to the family article, the new 24-page tract features a new cover design and a slightly larger size. Copies are available at 25 cents each and may be ordered by calling LifeWay's Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-2772.

They are part of the Fellowship of Christian Casino Workers (FCCW), an organization started in November 1997 under the guidance of John Landrum, the former Baptist pastor now serving as Chaplain to the Mississippi Beach.

While there is something paradoxical about the name of this organization, the fact is there are thousands of Christians working in the casino industry, according to Landrum.

"Many of them love the Lord and want to fellowship with

other Christians. Most casino workers, if active in a church, tend to pull back from church involvement because of the hours they work," Landrum said.

When weekends and all holidays are major work times in casinos, church involvement becomes problematic.

"We held an Easter rally (for casino workers) in the fellowship hall of First Church, Gulfport," Landrum said.

It was so well attended they decided to hold future FCCW rallies during the week before most major holidays.

"At FCCW, we try to offer opportunities for Christian casino employees to fellowship (and have) opportunities for spiritual growth.

"We have two 'Experiencing God' groups. Two days a month Christians from casino row in Biloxi meet at St. Marks Catholic Church parish house — a meeting started by a Catholic casino worker.

"There are Catholics, Baptists, Assemblies of God... we've had some that I didn't even know what their denominational affiliation was," Landrum said.

"One 'Experiencing God' group includes everything from a beverage server to an assistant manager of a casino.

"One casino has invited us to have a booth at their annual employee's health fair.

"We give away Bibles (at the fairs). We gave away 50 Bibles last year," he said.

A personnel manager in one casino asked Landrum for extra Bibles.

"She said she could not offer them to employees, but she

could put them on her shelf and if employees see them and ask about them, she can give them away," Landrum told.

"One manager came to me and asked, 'How do you know when God is speaking to you?' He had been led to the Lord by a Baptist pastor in the area, but didn't have an opportunity to grow in Christ.

"I invited him to one of our 'Experiencing God' studies. He came and brought his wife, who is a pit boss. She in turn brought her mother!" Landrum said.

"An employee from one casino attends the Bible study of another (casino's employee group). That employee goes to management and asks that a Bible study group be allowed there. This is how it has grown," he said.

Landrum is aware that this ministry is controversial. To his critics he says, remember that Jesus always started with a person where that person was, not where Jesus wanted them to be.

Landrum said the spiritual philosophy for the ministry is found in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope.'

"Some Christian workers find they must find something else to do. They cannot stay in the casino environment.

"However, many Christian workers feel called to stay where they are and be a missionary. Some in FCCW have said to me they would really like to get out, but they feel that God has them there for a reason," Landrum explained.

"Many Christian casino workers are not missionaries.

"They have opportunities to witness, but it is just not a priority in their lives — just like many of our church members," he said.

"We are experiencing revival at two of the casinos," Landrum said.

"We are told of employees coming to FCCW members and asking about the Lord.

"One assistant manager said that people used to come to him for help with personal problems, but he didn't know how to help them.

"Since learning from 'Experiencing God,' now he knows how to offer help," Landrum said.

Landrum's ministry is supported by individual donations. While it is a completely autonomous organization, Landrum is very much Southern Baptist.

"We got into this ministry because God said, 'Do it.' This is a 'where the rubber meets the road' kind of ministry," he said.

For more information on The Chaplain to the Mississippi Beach ministry, contact Landrum at 44 Fleetwood Drive, Gulfport, MS 39503. Telephone: (228) 863-0211. Email: chaplan@bellsouth.net.

For more information on gambling in Mississippi and how to get involved in fighting its influence, contact the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

WMU volunteers spend summer along Miss. River

GLEN ALLEN, Miss. (Special) — More than 300 volunteers from 13 states donated their time this summer to work in Mississippi River Ministry projects through Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Volunteer Connection.

Several of the projects were located in Mississippi. The Mississippi River Ministry (MRM) is a cooperative ministry between seven state conventions along the lower Mississippi River and the North American Mission Board.

Formed in 1992, the ministry seeks to bring together Southern Baptist resources to provide ministries, evangelization, strengthening of existing churches and starting of new churches in an area known as America's Third World.

Participating in a mission study in her church is what alerted Tammy Thornton to the needs along the Mississippi River. Thornton, a member of Harmony Church in Clinton, N.C., worked with a six-member team from her home state in Glen Allen, Miss., a small community south of Greenville.

The team conducted a Bible

school for children and adults in conjunction with an ongoing ministry coordinated by Ann Woods and sponsored by Washington Association.

Woods is doing what she can to make her ministry dream come true. She and her husband have purchased an abandoned school and hope to renovate it for use as a ministry center.

Thankfully, Woods' dream is closer to a reality. Richard Brogan, African-American relations consultant with the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson, is exploring ways the convention can help Woods and the association in the project.

When asked where she got her heart for missions, Woods said, "It had to come directly from the Lord. I've taught Bible classes since I was saved at age 25. I knew that God had given me the ability and gift to relate the Word to people, but it was always in my church and in the confines of the white race.

"Then this happened," she continued. "It's been the most the week. (WMU photo by Teresa Dickens)

rewarding, most wonderful thing that I've ever done, but also the most surprising because I never realized that this is what God would do with me.

"He is no respecter of persons," she remarked, "and we

better not be, either."

For MRM information, contact Brogan at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.



ON MINISTRY — Jeanette Walters, missions ministry consultant with the North Carolina Woman's Missionary Union, leads the six-member Volunteer Connection team to Glen Allen to work in a Mississippi River Ministry project July 27-31. The team worked with children and adults in a Bible school. Walters worked with the older children and teens during

Tennessee MRM vols help Mississippi church

TCHULA, Miss. (Special) — They came by plane, car, van, and travel home. They worked with children and adults in Bible study and handicrafts; sorted and distributed non-perishable food and clothes; conducted evangelistic events; and did construction work.

"They" are the more than 300 volunteers from 13 states who donated their time this summer to work in Mississippi River Ministry (MRM) projects through Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Volunteer Connection.

WMU's volunteers were among thousands of other volunteers who worked in projects in the 143 counties and parishes included in MRM. The final number of volunteers working on MRM projects this summer will not be available until the fall.



FINISHING TOUCH — Robert Brown, pastor of Grace Community Church in Tchula, seals wall-board in a church hallway while working with a mission team from Mt. Carmel Church, Cross Plains, Tenn. (WMU photo by Teresa Dickens)

Grace Community Church in Tchula, is one example where "unexpected resources" came in this summer. Tchula is in Holmes County, the third poorest county in the nation.

Hunger is a tremendous need in the community.

Knowing this need, Benny Still, long-time Mississippi pastor who is currently pastor of First Church, Grand Bay, Ala., arranged with a member of his church in May to get four pallets of food at a Jackson grocery store reclamation center.

The intention was to pick up the food when a 53-member team from his church went to Tchula for a week-long medical/ministry effort the week of July 20.

After a mix-up at the reclamation center that almost sent the Grand Bay church away with no food, persistence resulted in the church team coming away with eight and a half pallets, or 16,000 pounds, of non-perishable food.

"God answered our prayer in a mighty way," Still recalled. "Only God could have worked in the situation and produced those kind of results."

Along with the powerful answer to prayer, the donation of the food also provided the church an opportunity for increased witness in the community, noted Robert Brown, Grace Community Church's pastor.

"The announcement that we would be giving food away to families nearly doubled our Sunday attendance," Brown said, explaining that the prerequisite for receiving a box of food was attending church on Sunday and completing an application for the food distribution on Tuesday.

Seventy-five people attended the worship service July 26.

"The experience has brought in many of the adults for the first time," he continued.

"We've ministered to their children, but we had not captured their attention until now."

"I believe it has opened the door to minister to the whole family," he said.

The deluge of food also prompted the next group of volunteers to abandon their planned activities and work to sort and box the food items for distribution.

The 12 member team from Mt. Carmel Church, Cross Plains, Tenn., served in Tchula July 25-28 with WMU's Volunteer Connection.

The team arrived in Tchula planning to do a day camp, but quickly changed their plans when they saw the need with the food.

"It has been great!" said Maxine Toney on the day of the food distribution.

"We've enjoyed this trip so much because we've come to know the children that are involved. Everyone has cooperated to get the job done," she said.

Her husband James agreed.

"This has been more impressive than any other missions trip we've been on. Everything has fallen into place."

"It is amazing how the Lord works to do these jobs. It wasn't organized by us; it was the Lord doing it," he said.

For Brown and his congregation, the entire summer has been one of "the Lord doing it."

Each volunteer team that has come — seven teams visited the church this summer — has brought its own special blessing, and Brown knows the Lord has provided each one.

"We've come a long way in a short, short period of time," said Brown.

"It would not have happened if the Lord's people had not come in and walked along beside us," he pointed out.

For more information on the Mississippi River Ministry, contact Richard Brogan at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.



MEASURE TWICE...
Jimmie Harris, member of Mt. Carmel Church, Cross Plains, Tenn., saws a 2x4 to length for use in renovating a bathroom at Grace Community Church in Tchula. (WMU photo by Teresa Dickens)

Grand Bay church experiences life-changing summer missions

GRAND BAY, Ala. — Fifty-three members of First Baptist Church, Grand Bay, Ala., discovered what it means to be on mission with God this summer — and their lives will never be the same.

The volunteers, including 29 adults and 24 youth, spent July 19-25 working with Grace Community Church in Tchula.

The church's project was in conjunction with the Mississippi River Ministry, a cooperative ministry between seven state conventions along the lower Mississippi River and the North American Mission Board.

The team, the first of its kind for the congregation, worked in numerous projects while in Tchula. The team conducted a Vacation Bible School in the mornings; did witness training in the afternoons; held evangelistic services in the evenings; operated a medical clinic each day; and completed work on the church's air-conditioning system.

An on-going partnership has been formed between the two churches, with plans for weekend medical clinics and other special projects in Tchula. A group from the Tchula church recently visited Grand Bay, and the Grand Bay church has purchased 150 folding chairs for the congregation to use in worship and collected school supplies for the children.

The greatest results for the two congregations have been spiritual. Forty-five professions of faith were

made during the July project in Tchula. Twelve were baptized during the week in a borrowed horse trough from the local hardware. Grace Community Church is seeking to disciple the new believers and to involve them in other activities offered by the church.

At First Church, Grand Bay, the youth have continued to practice their evangelism skills, resulting in several professions of faith. Three members of the team have also made commitments to full-time ministry; two by youth and another by an adult youth leader. Overall, the experience has brought a renewal to the church not easily described, team members say.

"It was wonderful," said Denise Leonard, the adult leader who surrendered to full-time youth ministry while in Tchula.

"It is so very difficult to put into words. The Lord just blessed the trip. It was an experience that I will have with me all of my life. It also has made a big difference in our church. We have a different outlook on things now," he reported.

"You're not fully aware of how close such needs are to your own home," she observed. "You think about foreign missions and know that there is always a need in those countries and areas. Then, you go five hours from your house and you see such need. It makes you realize that we have so much work to do."

"It changed me one hundred percent," declared 20-

year-old Jonathan Garrett, who is studying to be a registered nurse and worked in the medical clinic while in Tchula. "I was a Christian before I went, but I'm 10 times the Christian I was before I left.

"Seeing the many needs the people there have made me realize that we take so many things for granted," he continued. "Being able to witness to people and lead people to the Lord also changes you. I've never really been a soul winner, but I got up there and led four people to the Lord."

For the churches' pastors, the experiences of the past few weeks have been energizing.

"Only God could have produced this kind of fruit," said Benny Still, who came to be pastor of the Grand Bay church in March from a pastorate in Mississippi. "I don't believe he is finished. This is just the spring board for his plans for our congregation."

Tchula pastor Robert Brown agrees that his congregation's new relationship with the church in Grand Bay is from the Lord. "They have provided great encouragement for us this summer, and meant so much to our ministry here."

For more information on the Mississippi River Ministry, contact Richard Brogan at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

STAFF CHANGES

Jimmy G. McGee, pastor of Monticello Church, Monticello, will be honored with a retirement reception at Monticello Church, Sept. 27, between the hours of 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. A native of Prentiss, McGee is a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. Other churches he served as pastor includes Old Silver Creek, Silver Creek; Old Hebron, Newhebron; Arcola, Arcola; First (associate pastor), Greenville; East McComb, McComb; and First, Grenada.

First Church, Nettleton, has called **Christy Anderson** of Saltillo as minister of students. Anderson received her education at University of Mississippi and Southwestern Seminary. She previously served as part-time at First Church, Nettleton.

Knoxo Church, Tylertown, has called **Dennis Langley** as pastor effective Aug. 23. A native of Louisiana, Langley attended Pensacola Christian College and is now attending New Orleans Seminary. He pre-

viously served as associate pastor of Bridge City Church, Bridge City, La.

First Church, Grenada, has called **Andy Cummings** as minister of music effective

Aug. 5. A native of Itta Bena, Cummings received his education at Delta State University and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was First Church, Columbus.

Cashion to direct IMB volunteer program

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Bill Cashion, a former Southern Baptist missionary to Venezuela and director of the International Mission Board's (IMB) human needs program, has been named director of the IMB's Volunteers in Missions department.

Cashion, 49, will coordinate the process of matching Southern Baptist short-term missions volunteers with strategic requests from Southern Baptist missionaries

overseas. In 1997, more than 17,000 Southern Baptists participated in overseas evangelism and ministry projects coordinated through the IMB.

He will assume his new role in mid-October after the world hunger consultation scheduled for Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center Oct. 9-11. He succeeds Jim Furgerson, who left the IMB in July to become director of Texas Baptist Men.

Cashion brings to his new role both extensive experience in using volunteers and a passion for evangelism and church planting, said Bill Bullington, the board's vice president for overseas services.

IMB has seen large increases each year in the number of short-term missions volunteers going overseas.



Cashion

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS



William Carey College (WCC) recently received a gift of a \$400,000 life insurance policy from John Clearman. A 1972 graduate of WCC with a bachelor of arts degree in religious education, Clearman was raised on a dairy farm in Lamar County and today still farms 600 acres. He also operates his own insurance agency, Clearman Insurance Agency. In addition, Clearman owns and operates poultry houses and a trucking company named Crusader Enterprises named because of his ties with WCC. Clearman is an active member of Temple Church. Clearman (center) is pictured (from left) Charley Wallace of Hattiesburg, Matthew Smith of McComb, and Katie Hurtienne of Hattiesburg, freshman theatre students.

Mississippi College Department of Music will present the compositions of John E. Frantz, adjunct faculty member, on Sept. 22 at 8:15 p.m. in Provine Chapel. The program will include chamber works for strings and woodwinds, an oboe concerto, a work for two trumpets and organ, a song cycle for soprano, and a choral composition. For more information call the music department at (601) 925-3440.

Office of Continuing Education, Mississippi College, will offer Real Estate courses scheduled to begin during the 1998 Fall semester. Real Estate Principles (GBU 353) beginning class date will be Oct. 21. For additional information call Ken Gilliam at (601) 925-3263.

Mississippi College (MC) music professor James Sclater of Clinton has once again been chosen by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) as a recipient of an ASCAP Award for the 1998-99 school year. Sclater has been a recipient of the award for the past eight years. He has been a member of the MC faculty since 1970.

Courses offered at Mississippi College, through

the Office of Continuing Education, and its adult enrichment PACE program are:

- The Art of Storytelling, Oct. 1-29.
- Smart Gardening, Sept. 24-Oct. 22.
- Automotive Maintenance for Women, Sept. 29-Oct. 27.
- Calligraphy for Beginners, Sept. 22-Oct. 20.

For registration information call the Office of Continuing Education at (601) 925-3263.

The Volunteers in Missions department will assist churches, associations, conventions, and missionaries to team up for sharing the gospel.

1999 WINTER BIBLE STUDY PREVIEW CLINICS JOSHUA



Dr. Ron Kirkland
Blue Mountain



Dr. Leslie Hughes
Delta State



Dr. Gene Henderson
Baptist Building



Dr. Walter "Chip"
Henderson
Youth Leaders
Baptist Building &
William Carey



Dr. Waylon Bailey
William Carey

TIME: 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

DATES:

Monday, Sept. 28

Tuesday, Sept. 29

Wednesday, Sept. 30

Thursday, October 1

PLACES:

Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain

BSU Center, Delta State, Cleveland

Baptist Building, Jackson

William Carey College, Hattiesburg

COMPLIMENTARY LUNCH

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT LARRY SALTER MBCB, SUNDAY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
(800) 748-1651 OR (601) 968-3800.

NO RESERVATION REQUIRED

Are your seniors tired of crawling over the HUMP? The solution is a 15-passenger van with an aisle, raised roof & electric step. Call Tri-State Van & Bus Today! 1-800-330-3622 BUSES! VANS! PEOPLE MOVERS!

WATTS 1-800-898-0551
Jackson 957-3762

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

September 17, 1998

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.

Lay Missions Conference

First Baptist Church, Jackson, October 26, 1998

Interest Conferences - 3 pm

- Agricultural Missions
- Construction Projects
- Educational Missions
- Partnership Missions
- Sports Evangelism
- Volunteers in Missions



Banquet 5 pm

- Dinner
- Music
- Volunteer Recognitions
- Testimonies
- Message



George Komendant
Executive Director
Ukraine Baptist Union



Jeff Brantley
Professional Baseball
Pitcher, St. Louis Cardinals

Registration Form

Make check payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ dinner reservations at \$8 per person.

Sponsored by Witness Team Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Mail to: Brotherhood Department • Missions Banquet • P. O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530

"Lord, I Will
Serve You In My
Marketplace"

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST MINISTERS' WIVES

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, JACKSON • MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1998 • 1:00-4:30 P.M.

• Inspiration, Fellowship, Personal Growth, Information, and Support for the Minister's Wife!

• There is no cost to you for this conference.

• Child care will be provided for preschoolers on a limited basis. Please use the registration form to schedule child care by October 19.

Registration Form

Complete the registration form and return to Julius C. Thompson, Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Name _____ Home Phone No. _____

Church _____ Association _____

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Husband's Position _____

Names and birth dates of preschool children you will bring _____



featuring
Melinda Yessick
Nashville - First Place leader,
teacher, conference leader,
Lifeway Christian Resources



Tommy Yessick
Nashville - Wellness-Leader
Care consultant, Lifeway
Christian Resources



GA Mother/Daughter Overnight (Grades 1-6)

Camp Garaywa, October 23 - 24

Begins Friday at 5 p.m. and ends 12:30 p.m. Saturday

Registration Deadline: October 15

Mother's Name _____

Daughter's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____ In case of emergency contact/phone # _____ / _____

Church Name _____

Association _____

Amount Enclosed: \$23 x # (of persons) _____ = \$ _____ (total)

Make checks payable to MBCB (Mississippi Baptist Convention Board)

Send to: WMU - GA Mother/Daughter Overnight, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530

CML



1998-99 Media Libraries...Ministering to Adults

27th Annual

**CHURCH MEDIA LIBRARY
CONFERENCE**

October 16-17, 1998

First Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss.

Conference Leaders

Beth Andrews, Arlington, Tex.

Barbara Freese, Hermitage, Tenn.

Sue Berthelot, Gonzales, La.

Eva Nell Hunter, Decatur, Ala.

Sandra Fitts, Corinth, Miss.

Rita Kirkland, Euless, Tex.

COURSES

- Getting Started: I'm New; What do I Need to Know?
- Collecting and Preserving your Church's History
- Choosing and Using Subject Headings
- Administration Getting the Work Done
- Automation MLS
- Preparing Audiovisual Media for Circulation
- Preparing Print Media for Circulation
- Promotion Design – Print
- Promotion the Basic Plan
- Classifying Using Dewey
- Promotion Design—Activities
- Ministering to the Needs of Adults

For more information contact:

Farrell Blankenship

Broadcast Services, MBCB

1-800-748-1651 or 968-3800

Registration Deadline - Oct. 5

AGENDA

Friday, October 16, 1998

9:30-10:00 a.m.	Registration and Browse Book Store
10:00-11:00	Opening Session
11:00-12:30	Selective Conferences
12:30-1:30	Lunch and Browse Baptist Book Store
1:30-2:30	Selective Conferences
2:30-2:45	Break and Browse Baptist Book Store
2:45-5:15	Selective Conferences
5:15-6:45	Dinner and Browse Baptist Book Store
6:45-8:00	Miss. Media Sampler
8:00-8:30	Browse Book Store

Saturday, October 17, 1998

8:00-8:30 a.m.	Continental Breakfast
8:35-8:45	Business Session
9:00-10:30	Selective Conferences
10:30-11:00	Break and Browse Baptist Book Store
11:00-Noon	Selective Conferences

Women on Mission Celebration

• Worship and Inspiration • Small Group Interests Sessions

Cost: \$50 lodging and three meals, \$35 meals only, \$20 no meals or lodging

REGISTRATION FORM

Church/Assn. _____

Phone _____

Contact Person _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Number of Women _____ x cost per person _____ =

Total enclosed: _____

Full refunds until August 18

(no cancellations by phone)

Make checks payable to:

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

Mail to: WMU Conference

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly
100 First Street
Pass Christian, MS 39571



Missionary Speaker
Gloria Thurman
Bangladesh



Music
Steve and Becky Carver
One Way Ministries
Starkville

September 18-19, 1998
Gulfshore Baptist Assembly
Pass Christian

Safeguarding Your Church Offerings



Your Church Offerings may be in jeopardy! A new resource is available to help. Safeguarding Your Church Offerings is a step-by-step guide to managing your church's money from receiving, counting and depositing to spending, recording, accounting, and auditing. No church treasurer should be without a copy. Managing the church's money is of equal moral significance to developing personal stewardship. Contact Laura Marler or David Michel in the Stewardship Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention to order a free copy of this 50 page guidebook. Also, budget covers for printing your church's budget on are available at no cost. Call 1-800-748-1651 toll free or 968-3800 locally.



1999 Mississippi Marriage Enrichment Opportunities

Main Street, Hattiesburg -- March 12 & 13
Gary Chapman, author of *Five Love Languages*
(call David Rogers -- 601-544-5444)

FBC, Tupelo -- March 19 & 20
Bob & Yvonne Turnbull, authors of *Marriage Mentors*
(call Mike Hatfield -- 601-842-4947)

FBC, Jackson -- November 5 & 6
Gary Smalley, author of *Making Love Last Forever*
(call Ronnie Falvey -- 601-949-1993)

1999 Family Week at Gulfshore
July 5-9
"Developing the Family Foundation"

1999 Senior Adult Retreats at Gulfshore
May 17-19, 20-22, 24-28
"The Joyful Heart of a Senior"

1999 State Singles Retreat at Gulfshore
May 29-31
"Cross-Country Training for 21st Century"

All Lads, Crusaders, & Challengers
Come hang out with
the guys... at R.A. Day
Saturday, October 3



Mississippi College

Grades 1-12, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., \$4 per person
Bring your own sack lunch and drink.

R.A. DAY REGISTRATION - DEADLINE MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

(one form per church please)

CHURCH

CHURCH ADDRESS

CITY

ZIP

PERSON SENDING IN FORM

PHONE NO. (During the Day)

NO. PEOPLE _____ X \$4 per person = \$ _____ Amount Enclosed

(Make checks payable to "Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.")

MAIL TO: R. A. Day, Brotherhood Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530

A Ministry of the Cooperative Program

1999 WINTER BIBLE STUDY PREVIEW CLINICS **JOSHUA**



Dr. Ron Kirkland
Blue Mountain



Dr. Leslie Hughes
Delta State



Dr. Gene Henderson
Baptist Building



Dr. Walter "Chip"
Henderson
Youth Leaders
Baptist Building &
William Carey



Dr. Waylon Bailey
William Carey

TIME: 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

DATES:

Monday, Sept. 28	Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain
Tuesday, Sept. 29	BSU Center, Delta State, Cleveland
Wednesday, Sept. 30	Baptist Building, Jackson
Thursday, October 1	William Carey College, Hattiesburg

COMPLIMENTARY LUNCH

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT LARRY SALTER MBCB, SUNDAY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
(800) 748-1651 OR (601) 968-3800.

NO RESERVATION REQUIRED

Pray this day for...

Prayer Ministry Office • P. O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

Pray Without Ceasing! Throughout the day there are numerous opportunities to commune with Christ in prayer. Use time in the car or time standing in lines to pray for your community. When working in the home, pray for your family. When mowing the lawn, pray for your neighbors. Though God may call you to seasons of protracted intercession from time to time, every day can be filled with exciting prayer moments." Tricia McCary Rhodes "Look to the Lord and His strength; seek His face always."

Pray for MegaChurches For Youth - Hawaii is experiencing a revival of the Christian faith, in which young Christians are playing a leading role. Churches with over 1,000 members are not unusual, with some reaching 5,000. Some groups meet in school halls, or even on the beach.

In light of our nation's need for repentance, the crisis surrounding the U.S. Presidency, let us intercede that the Lord expose and thwart all announced and other planned terrorist attacks. Pray that "wisdom from above" protection and courage be granted to all officials working to apprehend terrorists.

In Russia there are over 100 nations (ethnic groups or people groups). Most of them are unreached, several of them have no Scriptures in their native language. There are over 30,000 villages and towns in Russia where there is no church. Please pray for spiritual discernment, especially among believers.

Missionary David Glaze is serving as the statistics information analyst for the newly formed team that is targeting the Argentine people group. Pray that the data he collects will enable the team to discover and respond to the needs within that group as they share the gospel with them.

1 Chronicles 16:11

For Handbell Leadership Seminar, Ridgecrest BC, Madison; sponsored by Church Music; Women on Mission Celebration, Gulfshore Assembly, sponsored by WMU; Interfaith Witness Associates, Southside BC, Jackson, sponsored by the Evangelism Dept.

Anti-Gambling Day (Christian Action Commission Emphasis). Pray for Mississippi Baptists for three Gambling Conferences, FBC, Grenada, September 21; Park Place BC, Brandon, 22nd, FBC, Lyman, Gulfport, 24th.

18

19

Paul Wells, Friendship Mission, Fairbanks, AK, is pastor-director of the mission. Pray that God will give the congregation wisdom to know whether to expand their facilities or buy property and build.

27

Discipleship Training Rally (Discipleship & Family Ministry Emphasis); for Winter Bible Study Preview, Blue Mountain College, sponsored by Sunday School Dept.; Church Related Vocations Banquet, William Carey College, sponsored by Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries.

28

For Winter Bible Study Preview, BSU Center, Delta State Univ., Cleveland, sponsored by Sunday School Dept.; James Boulware, Altoona, PA, is a church planter pastor of Herald of Life Baptist Church. Pray that the Lord will provide the congregation with a larger facility.

29

Please pray for a Last Frontier nation where gospel portions will be selectively distributed by overseas volunteers in the near future. Pray for the preparation of hearts and minds of those who will receive these gospels.

30

October is Cooperative Program Month (Stewardship Dept. Emphasis). Pray that our churches will promote the Cooperative Program as they plan their budgets for next year. Pray for the Winter Bible Study Preview, William Carey College, sponsored by Sunday School Dept.

24

25

26

Master Control

October 10, 1998

Woodland Hills Baptist Church • Jackson

An incredible day of discipleship for Junior High/High School students and their leaders. Your students will be introduced to the new *Master Life: Student's Edition!* (available this fall)

SCHEDULE:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. | Check-in |
| 9:00 - 9:45 | Hi-tech, Hi-pop Kick-off |
| 10:00 - 11:00 | Session 1: Fresh Commitment to Christ |
| 11:15 - 12:15 p.m. | Session 2: Making a Difference |
| 12:30 - 2:30 | Break to Stuff Your Face and Have Some Fun |
| 2:30 - 3:00 | Loud and Eye-Popping Rally |
| 3:15 - 4:15 | Session 3: Using All You Got |
| 4:30 - 5:30 | Living Radical Challenge by Avery Willis, Author of <i>Master Life</i> |
| 5:30 | Head for Home |

Cost: \$10 per person

Send registration and a \$5 per person deposit to:

Master Control, DiscipleLife, P. O. Box 24001, Nashville, TN 37202.
For more information, call (615) 251-2855 or e-mail at pkelly@lifeway.com.
Registration deadline is 10 days prior to event.

Registration for Event at Jackson, MS, October 10

Church Name: _____ Phone: _____
Contact Person: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____
E-mail Address: _____

Number of Persons: _____ X \$5 = Total Deposit \$ _____

Please send deposit in check or money order; do not send cash. Deposit is non-refundable for cancellations made less than 30 days prior to the event.

1998 Youth Ministers Conference

Featuring:
Benny Proffitt
Jerry Pounds
Bayne Pounds
Chris Davis

November 9-11, 1998

Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville

Registration form
Youth Ministers Conference, November 9-11, 1998
Lake Tiak O'Khata

Name: _____ Position: _____

Spouse's first name, if attending: _____

Number and Age of Preschool Children, if attending: _____

Church Name: _____ Association Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Office Phone Number: _____ Home Phone Number: _____

I have made reservations at Lake Tiak O'Khata

I will not need a room, but will plan to eat the following meals:

Monday Dinner

Tuesday Dinner

Wednesday Breakfast

Tuesday Breakfast

Wednesday Lunch

Call Lake Tiak O'Khata (Toll free 1-888-845-6151) or write Lake Tiak O'Khata, P. O. Box 160, Louisville, MS 39339.

Complete the form and return to: Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205, no later than November 2, 1998. It is necessary that your registration be received by this date so that adequate preparation can be made.

SPONSORED BY THE
CHURCH ADMINISTRATION-PASTORAL MINISTRIES DEPT.
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

TRY 'GOOD NEWS BIBLE'

Editor,

While researching materials for a sermon on the recent revision to the Baptist Faith and Message, I found support for the recent letter you published from a Virginia reader.

The Greek dictionary appended to my Hebrew/Greek "Key Study Bible" defines the word translated "submit or be subject to," in most translations as "to exhibit under the eyes, i.e. (fig.) to exemplify, (instruct, admonish); show, (fore-)warn."

Since I could not extract "submit", I have to wonder: Is "submit" some kind of acronym developed from the varied definitions, or is there a better answer to avoid offending some people?

I did find one translation that helped. It does not require any proof texts, is already in context, and is one of the near-perfect three-point sermons found in the Bible.

I preached the subject sermon without adding one extra word. Ephesians 5:6 are complete in themselves, making the major point from 5:21 with

three relationships defined for both parties.

Perhaps that one sermon gave the translation or paraphrase its logical name, "The Good News" Bible. Try it and see who bears the burden of responsibility for the failure of the modern family.

There are no promises of any benefits added as we men often try to insert, and no excuse for us to continue Adam's major contribution to the "original sin," placing the blame on our wives!

Donald R. Windham, pastor
Ted Church, Bay Springs

BIBLE NOT BANNED

Editor:

If you are like me you have probably been led to believe that the Bible has been completely banned from our public schools.

Until recently I thought, and have heard it said many, many times by preachers, that the U.S. Supreme Court in 1963 banned it from our schools completely, along with prayer.

This is simply not true. Because most of us have been deceived, we have failed our kids and our nation by allowing this lie to live.

According to the law, the Bible can be taught in public schools as long as the course curriculum is concerned with education rather than indoctrination of students.

It is a deception that the Bible is forbidden in public schools.

In the landmark ruling in *School District of Abington Township v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203, 225 (1963), the U.S. Supreme Court held that "(it) certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities.

"Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may be effected consistently with the First Amendment."

It's time for us to get God back in our schools.

If you are concerned for our kids' future there is help. Write National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools, P.O. Box 9743, Greensboro, N.C. 27429-9743. Telephone: (336) 272-3799.

They will give you all the information on how to get the Bible back in your school.

Kenneth Patterson
Leakesville



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Staying Well Informed

Clinical Pastoral Education: Training the Helpers

Life can be hard not only for patients experiencing illness, but also for their families and friends. Often, a battle with illness or injury can take its toll on the entire family. The physical, emotional and financial pressures involved are formidable. But help can come in the form of a trained clinical pastoral education counselor.

Baptist's Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program, begun in 1993, trains ministers and laypersons to reach out and help families in need of support in the hospital. Since its inception, CPE has trained more than 100 chaplain interns in 12 courses. Counselors come from a variety of faiths and backgrounds, all with the same purpose: to equip themselves to minister to people in healthcare settings.

Participants are often pastors or members of a church's ministerial staff, but may also be laypersons charged with pastoral care responsibilities. Often, graduates serve as hospital chaplains, but they may also be found ministering in prisons and other settings in which chaplain services are needed. During the 400-hour course, students learn the basics of doing pastoral care with patients and their families by not only studying relevant theological principles, but by face-to-face interaction with patients and their families. Prayer and studying scripture are integral parts of the curriculum.

"CPE is a vital part of Baptist's mission of providing a ministry of Christian healing and is designed to help us emulate Christ's own healing ministry," said Dr. Paul Stephenson, Director of Pastoral Care at Baptist Health Systems. "These people aren't just here to read and study; they become involved in the lives of real people as they learn and develop their own style of ministry. They become part of the healthcare team."

For more information about CPE and other pastoral care programs at Baptist, call 968-5146.

Understanding the Benefits of Clinical Pastoral Education

For more information, call 1-800-948-6262.

Baptist
HEALTH SYSTEMS

© 1998 Mississippi Baptist Health Systems

A free specialized review of your church insurance?

IT COULD BE PRICELESS.

Every Southern Baptist church is different — including yours. The only way to truly know if you're getting the best insurance value is an on-site analysis by someone specializing in church insurance. Church Mutual has specialized in insuring churches for over 100 years. Today, we protect more churches than any other insurance company in America. And we offer an on-site insurance analysis of your church absolutely free. Find out if you're getting the best insurance for your money.

Call Church Mutual: The Specialist.SM

800-554-2642

© 1998 Church Mutual Insurance Company

Church Mutual
THE SPECIALISTSM

'Vessels' broadcasts slated on ACTS stations

Vessels

"Vessels — A Video Magazine" will be shown on a number of ACTS stations (Odyssey channels) and other cable television systems around the state during the week of Sept. 20-27, and at other times and locations to be announced.

Mississippi churches that have access to a cable channel can acquire a loaner tape from the Broadcast Services Dept. of

REVIVAL DATES

Damascus (Copiah): Sept. 21-25; Tim Myers, County Line Church, evangelist; Dale Heard, music; David Patterson, pastor.

Wiggins (Leake): Sept. 18-20; services, Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 10:45 a.m. and 6:45 p.m.; Greg Renfroe, evangelist; Danny Sephton, pastor.

Antioch, Prentiss: Sept. 20-23; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; John Cutrer, speaker; fellowship luncheon between services; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Mon.,

Bruce Jolly, speaker; Tues., John Sapp, speaker; and Wed., Archie Herrin speaker; Harvey Kelly, music; Larry Yarber, pastor.

Whitesand, Prentiss: Sept. 27-Oct. 1; regular service times on Sunday; weekday services, 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Valton Douglas, Laurel, evangelist; Bob Thames, Seminary, music.

the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in 3/4-inch, S-VHS, or other videotape for-

mat. For more information, contact the Broadcast Services Dept. at P.O. Box 530, Jackson,

MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

CITY	DATE	TIME	CABLE CHANNEL
First BC Calhoun City	Sept 24	7:00 pm	Galaxy Cablevision Channel 27
ACTS Channel 10 First BC, Cleveland	Sept 20 Sept 21 Sept 22 Sept 23 Sept 24	10:30 am 9:00 am 9:00 am 9:00 am 9:00 am	Warner Cable Co. Channel 10
Monticello BC	Sept 20 Sept 27	6:30 pm 6:30 pm	Galaxy Cablevision Channel 23
First BC Poplarville	Sept 23	5:00 pm Repeated	Galaxy Cablevision Channel 39
First BC Yazoo City	Sept 21 Sept 23	6:30 pm 8:00 pm	Cable One Channel 10
First BC Hattiesburg	Sept 20	6:00 pm	Comcast Cable Channel 6
First BC Greenville	Sept 22 Sept 24	11:00 am 7:00 pm	PCA Cable TV Channel 63
First BC Bruce	Sept 20 Sept 23	8:00 pm 7:30 pm	Cable One, Chan. 2 WO7BN, Channel 7
WBMS-10, Jackson	Sept 22	10:30 am	WBMS, Channel 10 Wireless One, Chan. 44

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, Colo., hosted the Conference On Southern Baptist Evangelist (COSBE), Aug. 19-21. The meeting was co-sponsored by North American Mission Board (NAMB). "This was an important meeting of the three groups in looking at the changing culture in American life, and seeking ways to bring people to faith in Christ," said Chester Estes Jr.

Prayer/Revivalist, Prayer Time Ministries, Union, and secretary-treasurer of Conference of Mississippi Baptist Evangelist (COMBE). Estes and Ronnie Cottingham, music evangelist, Lucedale, attended the meeting as guest of the NAMB and COSBE. Expenses of the meet-

ing were defrayed by NAMB and Focus on the Family.

New Home Church, Bay Springs, recently held dedication services for a new fellowship hall. Guest speaker was Gale Anderson, Taylorsville. Others on program were Billy Ray Smith, Raleigh, pastor; and James Ford, Bay Springs.

Ackerman Church, Ackerman, will celebrate its 25th anniversary on Sept. 20.

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Services will begin at 10:30 a.m. followed by covered dish in the fellowship hall. Guest speakers will be Dan Thompson, Nacogdoches, Texas; James Smith, D'Lo; and David Shivers, Holton, Ind. Deacons over 75 years of age will be recognized.

Beacon Street Church, Philadelphia, will hold its 50th

anniversary celebration Sept. 19 and 20. A singing will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. on Saturday. Services on Sunday will be held at 10:30 a.m., followed by a dinner in fellowship hall. Guest speaker for the event will be James Kirkendall of Oklahoma City, Okla. Kirkendall pastored Beacon Street from 1951-55.

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PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND PART-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH. Send resumes to Providence Baptist Church, 262 Zumbro Road, Cleveland, MS 38732.

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Recipients of the Small Church Pastor of the Year Award given during the Growing Churches conference at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, July 30-Aug. 1, were Chris Stewart and Morris Wolfe.

Stewart, pictured with wife, Penny, is pastor of Corinth Church, Pearl River Association. He is working on his master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary.

Wolfe, pictured with wife, Kathy, is pastor of Pine Crest Church, Rankin Association. A bivocational pastor in the insurance busi-

ness, this is Morris' first pastorate. He is a student in the undergraduate program for New Orleans Seminary at the Broadmoor branch in Jackson.

Matt Buckles, consultant at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in the

Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department, said the recipients, always pastors of churches with 300 or fewer members, are nominated through their associations with independent judges making the awards.



Chris and Penny Stewart



Morris and Kathy Wolfe



Carl Mason was licensed to the ministry on Aug. 23 by Union Church, Brookhaven. Mason is currently serving as interim pastor at Antioch Church, Lawrence County. Pictured with Mason (left) is Phillip Hemby, pastor.



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LIFE AND WORK

Power to share the gospel

Ephesians 3:1-13

By Michael D. Johnson

The popular comic strip Peanuts recorded the following conversation between Linus and Charlie Brown:

Linus: When I grow up I'm going to be a real fanatic.

Charlie Brown: What are you going to be fanatic about?

Linus: Oh, I don't know — it doesn't matter. I'll be sort of a wishy-washy fanatic.

There was certainly nothing wishy-washy about Paul in regard to his witness for Jesus Christ. This week's lesson will encourage our own efforts in the sharing of the gospel with all people.

The Mystery. Throughout

this passage, Paul refers to a 'mystery' that has now been revealed. The Word should not be under-

stood as something to be solved; much like we use the word today. In terms of the use in this passage, mystery is understood as that which can only be known when God decides to reveal the meaning. Jewish eschatology (study of last things) held that the final revealing act of God would be to inaugurate his kingdom. Paul indicates that the kingdom was ushered in with the arrival of Christ; an event inaugurated by God alone.

At the same time, however, we can understand mystery as



Johnson

attempting to think the thoughts of God (see 3:8 and 3:16). In a real sense, those who seek to explain (witness) the coming of Christ (which had been initiated by God) are speaking about something that is beyond human comprehension or articulation. Yet the tension arises with the fact that each follower of Christ is compelled to share the truth of God's mystery (3:7).

The Price. 1 Peter 3:18-22 reminds us that as when we follow Christ we should not be surprised that we may experience difficulties. After all, Peter reasons, if the founder of the faith gave his life then should we as followers expect the price to be any less? Paul had ample first hand experience with this truth.

Many scholars believe that Ephesians was one of four prison letters that Paul wrote

while he was awaiting trial before Caesar (see Acts 25-28). 2 Corinthians 11:23-33 provides a long list of the sufferings Paul endured as a follower of Christ. Tradition holds that Paul's second Roman imprisonment ended with his execution. Those reading these words today certainly do not face the hostility towards Christianity that Paul faced in his day. Still many fail in their duty of sharing the Gospel. What price was too high for Christ? For Paul? Just what price is too high for us?

The Reward. Paul claims in 3:8 that those who are willing to pay the price will have the privilege of sharing the "inexhaustible riches and generosity of Christ" (The Message). Barclay relates the story of the great orchestral conductor Toscanini who was commenting on one of Beethoven's symphonies: "Gentlemen, I am nothing; you are nothing;

Beethoven is everything."

Toscanini believed that his duty was not to draw attention to himself or to orchestra but to obliterate himself in order to let Beethoven flow through. What greater reward can we have, in a similar way, when we allow ourselves to be used as God's instrument for reconciliation.

The Task. In Ephesians 4 Paul spends considerable effort in describing how every believer has been gifted for a specific task to assist in building up the body of Christ (4:12). The job of reconciliation — the sharing of the gospel — is not only the job of every Christian, but the job of every church (3:10). Even though Paul was in prison he was most bold and confident in his witness. It is not a job for wishy-washy Christians. Only fanatics need apply!

Johnson is a professor in the Christian Studies and Philosophy Department at Mississippi College.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

God prepares people for deliverance

Exodus 7:14-18; 11:1, 4-7

By Walter M. Blackman

A popular commercial on television was people discussing their various brokers and opinions on what to do with finances. One person in the crowd would announce his/her broker and everyone would freeze; no movement, no sound. Every person in the room would strain to hear what the advertised broker would say.

The Lord spoke through Moses, but Pharaoh did not pay any attention. When Moses said "Thus says the Lord God of Israel," Pharaoh's response was "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice" (5:1-2).

God demonstrated to Pharaoh why he should listen to Moses,



Blackman

but the Lord also prepared the Israelites for his mighty deliverance.

God deals with an adversary (7:14-18). Moses tried two times to convince Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, but the Egyptian king refused. He made the Israelites work harder and his heart became hard. Moses was discouraged and the people blamed him for their increased hardship. The Lord sent Moses a third time to Pharaoh with orders to use his rod and turn the Nile river into blood. The Egyptians believed the Nile river was a god, giving them life. By turning the waters into blood, the Lord demonstrated his power over the gods of Egypt.

Serving the Lord often means facing adversaries. Satan is an adversary every Christian must face. The world and the flesh are also adversaries to the Christian (1 John 2:15, Gal 5:16-21). Sometimes, certain individuals can become adversaries to the will of God — even in the church! We should follow Moses' example by remaining steadfast in God's will and pray for the Lord to deal with the adversaries we face.

Jesus dealt with all the adversaries of God and defeated them at Calvary. When he rose from the grave, he demonstrated once and for all the power God has over every adversary, including death. We will never face any adversary God cannot handle and has not already defeated.

God prepares his people (11:1, 4-7). The Lord gave Pharaoh and the Egyptians nine plagues to convince them to let

his people go. Pharaoh showed signs of weakening, but each time his heart became harder. Refusing to hear and obey the Lord results in a hardening of the heart. The tenth and last plague brought about a dramatic change in Pharaoh's attitude. Not only would Pharaoh let the people go, but he would drive them out with everything they had, including the wealth of their neighbors. Every firstborn of Egypt, including the animals, were to die. In ancient times, the firstborn was usually given the largest share of the inheritance. In Pharaoh's house, the firstborn stood first in line to become king. What the Egyptians valued most, God took away because of their unwillingness to obey him. The Lord made a distinction between the Egyptians and Israelites, so much so that even dogs would bark at one of God's people.

God also prepared his people with the last plague. They had unbelieving hearts and rebelled

against the Lord (Ez. 20:5-20), but through the Lord's mighty work of deliverance, they believed and prepared to depart.

When we face hardships and difficulties, we look for quick answers and deliverance. However, the Lord often chooses ways to deal with adversaries that reveals himself to them and prepares his people to go forward in faith. Doing God's will may involve going through a time of preparation that is long and difficult, but produces a stronger faith.

Sometimes it is difficult for God's people to appreciate God's sovereign purpose in the world and focus on their own individual circumstance. God continues to work in powerful ways in the world today and he continues to call his people to prepare for whatever he leads them to do. Resisting God can lead to discipline, but trusting God leads to victory over all the adversaries of life.

Blackman is pastor of First Church, Marion.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

The foundations of life

Deuteronomy 5:11-21

By Greg Bowers

A few years ago, Ted Turner addressed the American Humanist Association and suggested that the Ten Commandments should be replaced. He proposed that they should be replaced with "voluntary initiatives" which deal with subjects like nuclear weapons, poverty, the environment, and so forth. Contrary to what people think about the Ten Commandments, they are still authoritative for us.

The commandment of priority. God is to be the supreme object of our loyalty and affection. Romans 6:16 indicates that we belong to the power we



Bowers

choose to obey. Many obey their sinful desires rather than the God who made them and desires a relationship with them.

The commandment of sovereignty. God prohibits the making and worship of idols and then gives the reason for such a prohibition — he is a jealous God. "Jealous" here refers to God's holiness. He is to be the sole object of human worship.

The commandment of sincerity. There are two ways by which we can misuse God's name. We can curse and use it negatively or it can become a part of our normal conversation without our even realizing it ("by God," "for God's sake")

God's name was so holy to the people of the Old Testament that they never even spoke it.

The commandment of sanctity. Our normal day of worship is to be kept holy. Holy means "set apart." Sundays should be uniquely preserved for worship and rest. God's intent is that we refrain from work and that we refrain from activities which will cause others to have to work.

The commandment of respectability. This is the only commandment which contains a reward for those to maintain it. Long, fruitful lives are promised for those who show respect to their parents. This is not a guarantee made to individuals, but is a promise is made to the entire nation.

The commandment of responsibility. This is a prohibition upon premeditated murder. Life is precious. Humanity

is created in God's image and we must respect it. In Roy Honeycutt's book on the Ten Commandments, he indicates that there are other methods of killing beside then physical. When we slander or mistreat someone, we murder.

The commandment of fidelity. In a society where one third of the population is alleged to have been unfaithful to their marriage partners, we need to remind people that adultery is not a fling, a dalliance, or even an affair. It is sin, plain and simple. The family has been instituted by God. His priority list places it above the state, the school, and even the church.

The commandment of honesty. Stealing can mean more than just another person's possessions. What about robbing God by withholding his tithe? What about stealing the one day which is to be set aside for worship and rest and using it for our own pursuits?

The commandment of testimony. We are commanded not to give false testimony about another, whether it is in a courtroom or anywhere else. False testimony about another is tantamount to character assassination. Christians are commanded to be people who tell the truth.

The commandment of security. To "covet" means to "lust." It indicates a strong desire for something which is not ours to possess. This is the only commandment which has to do with an attitude rather than an action. On one hand, it is the least harmful to others. On the other hand, it is likely the underlying reason for all of the other sins which are identified in the passage.

While some claim the Commandments are Old Testament and not applicable to us, nine of the ten commandments are repeated in the New Testament. They are not optional!

Bowers is pastor of First Church, Indianola.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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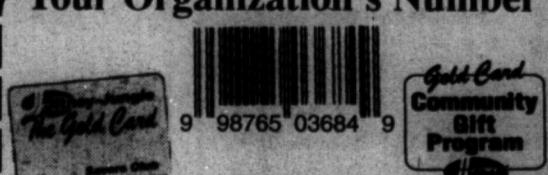
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Don't forget to link our Community Gift Program number to your Gold Card to help raise funds the easy way. Start Today!

Former enemy now pastors in Belize

SAN PEDRO, Belize (BP) — "My desire is to win souls. My dream is to go preach in places where the gospel has not been preached," Transito Mai says.

Three years ago, nobody in San Pedro, Belize, would have believed he would ever say such a thing. He was an enemy of the church and of godly people.

At the invitation of Southern Baptist missionary Victor Stefanini, Mai began to attend church services, although sometimes he was drunk and shirtless. The missionary persisted and told him, "What you need to do is accept Christ."

"Yes, that's what I need," Mai agreed. Within six months, he was preaching and soon was invited by the Baptists of San Pedro to become pastor of the church.

When Southern Baptist missionary Homer Hawthorne invited Mai to go with him to start work in the south of the country, he gladly agreed. Now the association of churches pays for Mai and another man to go once a month to work with new believers in the south.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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EGH FSMLJPJU FNZZ
GMW HM WSJ ZEF MT
WSV RMH, EGH WSJ ZEF
MT WSJ CNGR, ZJW
BKHRQJGW AJ JYDKWJH
LOJJHNZV KOMG SNQ,
FSIWSJU NW AJ KGWM
HJEWS, MU WM AEGNL-
SQIGW, MU WM
DMGNTNLDEWNMG MT
RMMHL, MU WM
NQOUNLMQQJGW.
JXUE LPIG: WFJGWV-LNY

Clue: U = R

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John One Twelve.

Analysis: Children often among the persecuted

By Erich Bridges
International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Yin Xu was 5 years old when she began to realize her family was not welcome in China.



COMING OF AGE — Yin Xu today (above) and at age 10 (right), when the Cultural Revolution began in China with a wave of persecution that swept over her family — and continues to be a factor today in her native country. (BP photos)

"The looks (people) gave us were hostile," she remembers. "When I walked on the street, the neighbors were not friendly with me. I felt shame and fear, but I did not know why."

Xu had begun to suffer for Christ — before she even knew him as Lord and Savior.

Her father, Jifa Xu (pronounced SHOO), was a second-generation Christian pastor in the city of Nanjing.

Her mother, Ruth, was a third-generation believer.

It was a dangerous pedigree for a child in the China of 1960, when communist persecution of religious believers was steadily intensifying.

"In China, what kind of family you are from means everything," Xu explains.

"It's not just Grandpa. It's Grandpa's grandpa's grandpa.

In communism they dig up your family history."

In her case, they didn't need to dig very far. As a child, Xu hadn't yet embraced her parents' faith in Christ.

No matter. As their daughter, she too came under government suspicion.

The worst was yet to come. When she was 10, the Cultural Revolution began — unleashing a decade-long reign of terror in China against religious believers, educated people, and millions of others condemned as "reactionary elements" by Chairman Mao's militant and deadly Red Guards.

As Christians, Xu's parents were obvious targets. Both were sent to concentration camps to be "re-educated."

"I took care of my two younger sisters and lived with my grandmother," Xu remembers.

"I had to face the (local) Cultural Revolution leaders. They asked me to speak about what my parents did wrong against the Communist Party.

"I was scared to look at their faces, and I didn't know what to say," she recalled.

Her parents eventually came home, but the hardships didn't end.

"At school I lost a lot of rights to attend activities, because my parents were under watch.

"I was told they were not good people, so I was not a good child. Only a few people would be friends with me.

"When I was in high school, my father was put in jail. Every Saturday people were executed. I had started having migraine headaches at age 9, so every Saturday my headache came back.

"If all the names (of those executed) were posted without my father's name, a rock was moved away from my heart. Then I waited for the next Saturday," she said.

How does a child endure such pain and fear?

Not without scars.

The family survived the terrible times. Her father was released after two years and cleared of the false charges against him.

After the Cultural Revolution ended, Xu entered a university, studied music at a conservatory, and later taught music at the Christian seminary in Nanjing.

The family left China and settled in Louisville, Ky., where her father now ministers to Chinese students.

Xu entered Southern Seminary there and earned a divinity degree.

Today she works as a hospital chaplain in Atlanta and prepares for a ministry of counseling — eventually, she hopes, with others who have experienced similar hardships.

"Spiritually and emotionally, they suffer many traumas," Xu said.

"They have difficulty being themselves, and letting themselves have a voice to be heard by others," Xu observed.

She wants to help them find that voice.

Xu's worst suffering is over, but it represents religious persecution still occurring in many areas of the world.

How many children today are among the estimated 200 million Christians experiencing persecution in scores of countries?

How many face hunger, hostility, even violence each day?

How many never get a chance for education or a job in societies that reject them?

Many children begin suffering before they have the opportunity to choose — or even understand — their life of persecution and hardship.

In the minds of persecutors, the righteousness of the father must be visited upon the sons and daughters — in the form of punishment.

"I saw the tears of the oppressed — and they have no comforter," says the preacher in Ecclesiastes 4:1.

Who comforts the children of persecuted Christians? We can comfort them.

Aiding the persecuted

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — To take the first steps toward becoming an advocate for persecuted Christians around the world:

◆ PRAY. For specific daily prayer requests that often focus on Christians living their faith in hostile areas, connect to CompassionNet on the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) Web site (<http://www.imb.org>) or call the IMB PrayerLine at (800) 395-PRAY.

◆ READ "Their Blood Cries Out" by Paul Marshall (Word 1997) and "In the Lion's Den" by Nina Shea (Broadman & Holman, 1997) for information about the persecuted and how to aid them.

◆ CALL the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission at (615) 244-2495 or check the agency's Internet site — <http://www.erlc.com> — for help in obtaining these books and other resources on Christian persecution.



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

My husband and I will soon celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. For all these years, we have used a false date to conceal the fact that I was pregnant when we got married. I have become distressed about letting this lie go on for so long. We are strong Christians and very active in church. Our fine Christian children are now raising their own fine children in the faith. Should we confess our deception?

You and your husband made a mistake by engaging in premarital sex that led to a pregnancy, but the two of you have obviously tried hard to overcome that early difficulty. Very few couples in similar circumstances stay together for fifty years, which strongly suggests that love and repentance have been at work in this relationship.

In addition, your testimony that your Christian children are now training your grandchildren in the faith is an indication that you and your husband made a lot of good decisions since that first poor decision to have sex. You have risen to the challenges of turning your lives around and establishing a strong foundation for your family. You are to be commended for that accomplishment.

The distress you have felt for nearly a half-century is the

the unfortunate consequence of sin. Even though we can be forgiven through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the consequences of sin often remain with us. If you feel you must address the deception, call your family together and talk honestly about this situation. Discuss among yourselves whether this is something that others outside the family should know. Allow your family to have input into decisions about this matter, such as whether to continue celebrating the false date or possibly celebrating the true date as a small family observance.

In my opinion, you and your husband have settled this issue. The witness of your marriage and commitment to each other, along with your efforts to reconcile this sin and live as followers of Christ, is much more important than a date on a calendar. In other words, you have made proper peace with the past. On your 50th anniversary, celebrate your wonderful marriage and let this matter rest. Don't live in the past, which will rob you of your joy in the future. Watch your children and grandchildren grow in their love for the Father, and know that despite your sin God was able to use you in that most important process.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.